

Name _____



Legends Matter

In *Holes* by Louis Sachar, storytelling and folklore play a big role in shaping the novel's events and themes. The book weaves together different stories from the past and present, showing how history repeats itself and how the choices of past generations still affect Stanley and Zero today.

One important legend in the story is the tale of Stanley's great-great-grandfather, Elya Yelnats, and Madame Zeroni. Elya wanted to marry a girl named Myra but was unsure how to impress her. Madame Zeroni gave him a pig and told him to carry it up a mountain every day to make it strong. She also told him to carry her up the mountain as well. Elya took the pig up but forgot his promise to Madame Zeroni. Because of this, she warned that his family would be cursed forever. This story explains why Stanley believes his family has always had bad luck, which is part of the reason he ends up at Camp Green Lake.

Another piece of folklore in the novel is the legend of Kissin' Kate Barlow. Long ago, Green Lake was a thriving town, and Kate Barlow was a kind schoolteacher. She fell in love with Sam, an onion seller, but their love was forbidden because of racial laws. When Sam was killed, Kate became an outlaw and robbed people, including Stanley's great-grandfather. She buried treasure somewhere in the desert, which later connects to Stanley's present-day adventure.

These stories do more than just explain why things happen—they also help Stanley and Zero break the cycle of bad luck. When Stanley carries Zero up the mountain, it mirrors what Elya was supposed to do for Madame Zeroni. By helping Zero, Stanley unknowingly lifts the curse on his family. This shows that the past can be changed when people make the right choices.

Through storytelling and folklore, Sachar teaches readers that history matters and that stories from the past help us understand the present. The legends in *Holes* are not just tales—they guide the characters' actions and help them find their true path.